<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1.-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of adjusting kerning for a pair of characters to be modified, the pair of characters being members of a set of characters, where a kerning value for each unmodified character pair in the set is known, said method comprising the steps of:

a. estimating, independent of any characters in the set other than the pair of characters to be modified, an amplitude of the character modification in the kerning direction for each character of the pair,

<u>wherein the modification to each character comprises perturbing the outline of the character;</u>

b. applying a function to each amplitude[[,]]; and

c. increasing the kerning value for the character pair by substantially the sum of the applied functions.

26. (Canceled)

27.   (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~26~~ 25, wherein the perturbation is selected from the group consisting of sinusoidal, square wave, and triangular wave perturbations.

28.   (Currently Amended) Apparatus for adjusting the kerning value for a pair of characters to be modified, the pair being members of a set of characters, wherein a kerning value for each unmodified character pair in the set is known, said apparatus comprising:

first memory means to store said known kerning value for each unmodified character pair in the set;

estimation means for estimating, independent of any characters in the set other than the pair of characters to be modified, an amplitude of the character modification in the kerning direction for each character of the pair, wherein the modification to each character comprises perturbing the outline of the character;

function applying means for applying a function to each said amplitude;

value adjusting means to add to said known kerning value for the pair of characters to be modified substantially the sum of the applied functions; and

second memory means to store the sum of said addition as an increased kerning value for the modified character pair.

29.   (Previously Presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein said first memory means is a ROM.

30.   (Previously Presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein said second memory means is a RAM.

31.   (Previously Presented) Apparatus as claimed in claim 28, wherein said value adjusting means is an adder.

32.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product for adjusting the kerning for a pair of characters to be modified, the pair being members of a set of characters, wherein a kerning value for each unmodified character pair in the set is known, said product comprising:

first memory means to store said known kerning value for each unmodified character pair in the set;

estimation means for estimating, independent of any characters in the set other than the pair of characters to be modified, an amplitude of the character modification in the kerning direction for each character of the pair, wherein the modification to each character comprises perturbing the outline of the character;

function applying means for applying a function to each said amplitude;

value adjusting means to add to said known kerning value for the pair of characters to be modified substantially the sum of the applied functions; and

second memory means to store the sum of said addition as an increased kerning value for the modified character pair.

33.   (Previously Presented) The product as claimed in claim 32, wherein said value adjusting means operates in accordance with the equation:

$$k = k_1 - f(a) + f(b)$$

where k is the adjusted kerning distance, k_1 is the known kerning distance, a is the amplitude of the modification applied to a first of the characters of said pair of characters, b is the amplitude of the modification applied to the second of the characters of said pair of characters, and f represents the function applied to the estimated amplitudes of the character modification.

34.   (Previously Presented) The product as claimed in claim 33, where the function has a maximum amplitude of f(max) = a and said value adjusting means operates in accordance with the equation:

$$k = k_1 + 2a.$$

35.   (Canceled)